



## BRULE RIVER STATE FOREST MASTER PLAN FACT SHEET

### *General History*

The Bois Brule River valley and the uppermost St. Croix River valley were carved by meltwater flowing south from glacial Lake Superior and the surrounding uplands. When the glaciers receded, a divide was formed out of which the Brule and St. Croix Rivers flow today in opposite directions. A portage was established between these two rivers, connecting Lake Superior and the Mississippi River watersheds. It was used by early native people and later by European explorers, traders, trappers and missionaries.

Early historical evidence indicates that natural and man-caused fire had a significant impact on the area. The Brule area began to be recognized as a recreational resource in the mid 1800's. Cutting of the pine forests began in the 1890's. Logging dams and log drives had severe impacts on the river during that period of exploitive logging. The exploitation was followed by wildfire and burning to clear the land for agricultural purposes. In the 1930's, most attempts at agriculture were abandoned, and a fledgling forestry program was in place. The Civilian Conservation Corps camp at Brule assisted in early fire control and reforestation efforts from 1933 to 1941.

The Brule River State Forest began with a gift of land from Frederick Weyerhaeuser's Nebagamon Lumber Company in 1907. Today, the state forest contains the entire length of the Bois Brule River. The river is spring fed and runs cold and clear with a steady flow. The river falls 420 feet from its source to Lake Superior, resulting in numerous rapids and ledges. These attributes help give the Brule its reputation as an excellent coldwater fishery and canoeing stream. The Forest is visited by over 120,000 recreationists annually. Famous visitors include 5 men who were U.S. presidents: Ulysses Grant, Grover Cleveland, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover and Dwight Eisenhower.

It was not until the late 1950's that a full-time manager was assigned to the Brule River State Forest and a sustained yield forestry program and recreation facilities began to be developed. The first Forest staff was stationed at the former Gordon State forest nursery. In 1963, the staff was moved to quarters in the Brule Ranger Station. The Boundaries of the state forest were changed over time. Some significant changes were made in 1959, when the boundary was extended to include Lake Minnesueing on the southwest and the river corridor north of US highway 2 to Lake Superior. In 1979, several miles of Lake Superior shoreline were added to the Forest.